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Community Canning--Princeton, New Jersey, Way

Broadcast by Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, and Wallace Kadderly, Radio Service, in the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Tuesday, May 4, 1943, over stations associated with the Blue Network.

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WALLACE KADDERLY: Now the story of how one community ran a canning kitchen last summer. And this is only one of the many such community enterprises in every state. Many more communities will be doing it this summer. For canning equipment is scarce. And we need to put by for next winter's eating every pound of fruits and vegetables over and above what we need to eat fresh.... But Ruth Van Deman's here to tell the real story of how a New Jersey community did the job last summer.

RUTH VAN DEMAN: Princeton, New Jersey, to be exact. And the real person to be telling this is Mrs. J. P. Barney. Mrs. Barney is Chairman of the Princeton Community Canning Kitchen. Mrs. Barney was kind enough to write me a letter telling how the Princeton canning kitchen operated.

All the agencies interested got together and formed a committee. To quote Mrs. Barney:

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

"The Princeton Garden Club financed the project.

"The Borough of Princeton furnished garbage disposal and transportation when needed.

"The Nutrition Committee of the Defense Council cooperated in many ways.

"The local newspapers gave us space.

"The Boy Scouts and the students of Princeton University picked fruit.

"The labor was all voluntary; not a penny was paid for it.

Morning and afternoon shifts were formed from a cross section of the women of Princeton. The Kitchen was operated every day of the week except Saturday and Sunday.

"All of the produce canned was donated from private gardens, except the very small percentage brought in by individual women to can for their own use."

As for equipment, the Princeton Board of Education gave permission to use what they had. The committee bought one pressure cooker and three water-bath outfits. And four public-spirited individuals lent their pressure cookers.

VAN DEMAN: (cont'd): All told, this community canning kitchen put up 2,652 containers of fruits and vegetables.

Well, that was the record of the Princeton, New Jersey Canning Kitchen in 1942. Mrs. Barney says, "We will operate the kitchen again this summer on a larger scale. We expect to have one paid worker there every day. We feel we must be sure all foods are handled the same way...and the right way. We are a little concerned about pressure cookers. People who loaned their cookers last year do not feel that they can spare them or run the risk of wearing them out with no chance of replacing them," Mrs. Barney says in closing.

Well, they're right about that. Home-size pressure canners aren't made to do a heavy-duty job for the whole community. They can process canned food for more than one family.

But, watch out, community canners, don't push these small steam pressure outfits too hard. We're going to need them longer than just this summer. They're built to handle about 300 or 400 jars a year at the most.

KADDERLY: Ruth, do you know about the larger size canning equipment the Food Distribution Administration is planning to make available to communities soon?

VAN DEMAN: Yes. That's the equipment from the WPA canning projects now closed off. But those pots and pans and canning retorts are going to do a tour of duty for us in wartime. Plans for using that community canning equipment will be announced soon by the Department.

And still available is a bulletin on Community Food Preservation Centers... how to organize and run such a center. It was prepared 2 years ago. But most of the information is still up to date.

KADDERLY: Good. Then, Farm and Home friends, if any of you are planning a community canning center and want some suggestions to help you, just address a post card...Home Economics, U. S. D. A., Washington, D. C. Ask for the bulletin, "Community Food Preservation Centers."

And, Ruth, please give Mrs. Barney our thanks for sending such a complete account of the Princeton Canning Kitchen.

VAN DEMAN: I'll do that.

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